

Annesdale
1325 Lamar Avenue
Memphis
Shelby County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-178

HABS
TENN,
79-MEMPH,
14-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HABS
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79-MEMPH,
14-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ANNESDALE

HABS No. TN-178

Location: 1325 Lamar Avenue, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee.

Present Owners: Robert G. Snowden and his sister Mary Snowden Todd.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: Annesdale is an impressive Italian Villa style mansion. Built about 1858-61 it is named for the wife of Colonel Robert Bogardus Snowden, who purchased it after the Civil War. The house has been continuously occupied by descendants of the Snowdens. Its roomy interiors are resplendent with marbles, walnut paneling, painted ceilings and trim. The house is one of the large Memphis mansions built during the city's boom years of the 1840s and 1850s.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: About 1858-61.

When this property was bought in 1856 by John P. Caruthers, there was no significant improvement done to it. From 1858 to 1861 it was reported that it had trebled in value; this indicates that the house was built during this period. (In 1860 Caruthers sold the unfinished house to Dr. Samuel Mansfield who finished it the following year. The house's unusually high value was also due to inflation caused by the Civil War).

2. Architect: Not known.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The following chain of title may be established from the Register of Deeds and from Will Books of Shelby County:

Before

1856 Land (including the portion which later became the present property) was granted to A. B. Carr.

1856 Deed June 2, 1856, recorded April 2, 1857 in Book 28, page 190 (20.85 acres - \$10,000.00)
Charles R. Hendrickson and Mary Jane Hendrickson (wife)
to
John P. Caruthers, for a portion of A. B. Carr land grant

- 1860 Deed April 12, 1860, recorded May 14, 1860 in
Book 41, Part 2, page 588 (\$31,000.00)
John P. Caruthers
to
Dr. Samuel Mansfield
- 1866 Deed November 3, 1866, recorded December 5, 1866 in
Book 58, Part 2, page 150 (14 acres - \$70,000.00)
Dr. Samuel Mansfield, Mary B. Mansfield (wife), and Felix
W. Robertson (her trustee)
to
Henry A. Montgomery
- 1870 Deed August 31, 1870 recorded September 10, 1870 in
Book 75, page 423 (\$30,000.00)
Henry A. Montgomery
to
Annie B. Snowden
- 1923 Will June 24, 1916 recorded May 11, 1923 in
Will Record 34, page 2
Annie Brinkley Snowden
to
J. Bayard Snowden (her son)
- 1968 Will April 19, 1968 recorded December 5, 1968 in
Will Record 129, page 181
J. Bayard Snowden
to
Robert C. Snowden (son) and Mary Snowden Tood (daughter)

4. Alterations and additions: A two-story porch with cast-iron work was attached to the house's rear south elevation around 1900. There is evidence of a former porch on the east side near the south elevation.

A sitting room was built to the east of the Front Parlor on the first floor after 1912.

Other changes have been done to the house, such as installation of electrical wiring and plumbing fixtures.

- B. Historical Context: John P. Caruthers was an attorney and judge of the Common Law Court of Shelby County.

Dr. Samuel Mansfield, who owned the property from 1860 to 1866 after Caruthers, was a wholesale druggist. His firm advertised his products in the Memphis papers throughout the third quarter of the 19th century.

Henry A. Montgomery, the next property owner, had operated a planing mill before the war. He laid the first telegraph line across the Mississippi River (which was severed in 1862). After the war he went into the cotton compress business and was successful at this until his death in 1887. His sale of the mansion coincided with the death of his wife in 1870.

The home was purchased by Annie Overton Brinkley Snowden, a granddaughter of Judge John Overton, principal founder of Memphis. It has since been known as Annesdale in her honor. She was the daughter of Colonel Robert C. Brinkley, whose name figures prominently in the story of the Memphis Ghost House (recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey as Brinkley Female College, HABS No. TN-189). Miss Brinkley married Colonel Robert Bogardus Snowden in Nashville in 1868; they moved to Memphis in 1870. He was prominent in civic improvements (street railway, turnpikes, sewerage system) and in commerce (factories, banks, railroads, insurance and land companies). His occupation was listed in the City Directories as "capitalist." The home remains in the Snowden family.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This Italian Villa style mansion, constructed of brick, has three pedimented pavilions and a four-story pyramidal-roofed tower. Its floor plan is that of a central hall, having flanking rooms.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent; well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures about 70' from east to west and about 80' from north to south. It stands about 36' to top of cornice and about 60' to top of tower. It is a full two stories in height with the first level being about 4' above the grade. There are a full basement and an attic. A four-story tower is situated over the building's main entrance.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Walls: The exterior brick walls are laid in running bond courses (no headers are observed). There are brick quoins at the corners. All brick surfaces are painted grey. There are wood frame rectilinear bay projections, which are painted white. These projections are located (1) on the center of the north front; (2) at the northeast corner; (3) on the west side near the south end.

The latter projection has a diagonal wall cut on its southwest corner. The projection at the northeast corner is two level high, and both levels are decorated with pilasters. The one centrally located on the north front is one story in height and has a balcony leading to a second story room.

4. Structural system, framing: The building has 18" exterior bearing walls of brick supporting floor joists which span from east to west between the exterior walls and the intermediate walls defining the central hall. The bearing walls extend to about 5' above the attic floor where the roof timbers begin. The roof is framed with 2" x 8-1/2" members.
5. Porches: A one-story veranda with arched openings begins at the west side of the entrance tower and continues around the west side of the building to the porte cochere. It has a brick and stucco or concrete base with a concrete deck, 16" square (greek cross section) stone piers, stone railing and balusters and wood arches and spandrels. It has a flat roof with a wood and iron railing, and it also serves as a balcony.

On the south rear there is a two-story porch with black cast-iron work for the columns, railings and cornices. This porch was added around 1900.

A porte cochere is connected to the house on the west side. Its base is at ground level but its roof lines up with that of the northwest veranda. Its expanded arches repeat the motifs found in the spandrels of the veranda arches.

There is a small balcony projecting from the north side of the tower, on the second floor. It is topped with a bracketed cornice and flanked by pilasters.

There is also another balcony on the top of the one-story wood bay projection, in the center front side. It is already mentioned in the Wall description on page 3.

6. Chimneys: There are seven chimneys on this building. All except one are located at the perimeter walls. On the west side there are one located near the north end and a plain one straddling the west gable (roof of the west pavilion). On the south side there are two. On the east side there are one near the south end and another straddling the gable. The seventh chimney is situated near the northeast corner about 20 feet from each side. With the exception of the plain brick chimney on the west gable, they all have an articulated brick surface of arches and projections. They measure about 3'-6" x 1'-5" and 2'-1" x 1'-5".

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance doorway is located on the north side under the entrance tower. It is a double door with glass panels. It is topped with a semicircular transom. The composition measures 5'-0" x 11'-6". A door on the west side fits into a 3'-8 x 11'-0" arched opening with a semicircular transom. A similar door is located on the south side.
- b. Windows: All window openings located in the brick walls are arch headed. The openings measure 3'-8" wide x 10'-4" high and have 4/4 double-hung wood sash. The openings have either brick soldier course arches or cut stone arches. On the east and west sides the arched openings located in the pedimented pavilions have pilasters, spandrels and cornices in brick.

The first floor of the frame projections have arched openings containing French windows. The double windows have 2" x 4" glass lights and are topped with semicircular transoms. The second floor of these projections have 4/4 double-hung sash with flat arched openings.

(For the tower windows, see Tower description on page 6)

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is a combination of hip and gable with the center part hip and the gables (pedimented pavilions) extending from it on the north, east and west sides. The tower roof is pyramidal. All roof surfaces are covered with green mission tiles (semicircular section).
- b. Cornices: The brick part of the house has a bracketed cornice extending about 3' from the wall surface and about 3' in height. The soffit is of 3" wood boards and the space between the brackets (brackets circa 3' on centers) has a brick patterned surface. The cornice and brackets are painted white.

The cornices on the one-level wood projections on the north and west sides have small brackets. The two-level wood projection on the northeast corner of the house has two cornices. The one on the first level is same as those on the one-level projections. The one on the second level has large brackets and panels.

- c. Tower: A prominent external feature is the four-story tower centered on the north front over the entrance. The brick tower has openings at each of four levels with the cornice line extending around the tower. It is located at the inside of an L created by two walls and is thus worked into the body of the building. It is divided into two parts by the dividing cornice line. The lower portion is articulated on the first floor with an arch to the entrance and on the second with the flat arched window opening. Above the cornice the third level (corresponding to the attic) has two narrow slit arched openings with double-hung windows. The fourth level has four narrow slit arched openings with double-hung windows. The wall surface is articulated with blind arches. The low pyramidal roof has a bracketed cornice similar to the main cornice. There are Corinthian pilasters and a bracketed cornice on the second floor window.
9. Other information: There is an interesting exterior wall lamp on either side of the main entrance. Each lamp has a cherub figure with a leaf motif, and has three lights and glass shades.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The house has a central hall plan with rooms on either side. The double hall extends from the north front to the south rear and is divided by double doors into main and service halls. The building is thus zoned into two distinct sections - the servant and served. Along the east side of the central hall there are a parlor at the north front (with a sitting room to its east), a Music Room (Rear Parlor), a bathroom, breakfast room and butler's pantry. Along the west side are a library at the north front, a large dining room (31'-4" x 20'-4") and the kitchen. A magnificent walnut stairway to the second floor is on the east wall of the hall.

The second floor plan is similar to the first except that the rooms flanking the halls are chambers.

The basement is divided similarly by the bearing walls supporting the central hall walls. In the northeast corner was a wine cellar. A cistern in the central basement hall has been filled in.

The full attic is undivided.

2. Stairways: A beautiful walnut stairway is located against the east wall of the central hallway. In a single run it sweeps from the south end to the left along a curved east wall into which it is tied. It is cantilevered on its free side, and is a closed-string type. It is about 4' wide. There are twenty-five

risers of 7" and the treads vary according to their position on the stairway. The walnut handrail swirls around at the bottom of the stairway to connect with the turned walnut newel. On top of the newel is a crystal finial. The turned walnut balusters are 4" on centers, with a 31" high railing.

A servants' stairway is located in the rear hall along the east wall. It gives access to the second floor rear hall. There are twenty-two risers with four winders to the left and eighteen straight risers. The stairway is 3'-0" wide. The risers measure 8" with 10-1/4" treads. There are turned balusters and a newel post.

A 33" wide stairway over the servants' stairway gives access to the attic. Its nineteen risers measure 8-1/2" with 9" treads. It is a single run.

Stairs to the basement are located under the servants' stairs. There are eighteen risers at 7-1/2" (treads = 10") and 2'-4" wide.

3. Flooring: Most floors are 2-1/2" oak tongue-and-groove boards. The central hall has 12" square black and white marble tiles in a checkerboard pattern. Promenade tile is used in the two-level frame projection on the northeast corner of the house. Linoleum is used in the service areas and marble tile is used in the bathrooms. The basement floor is brick, laid in running courses.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

Basement: The basement walls are of brick. Its ceiling is of wood lath and plaster. Its wall thickness is 8-1/2". The ceiling height is 10'-0".

First floor:

Entry Hall: Wood lath and plaster walls and plaster ceiling with a heavily molded plaster cornice.

Front Parlor: The walls have dark walnut paneling with a carved wood panel at the top. Above the paneling is a small frieze and ornate plaster crown molding. The ceiling is ornate with a plaster molding, a plaster parget, a medallion and painted figures. Originally, all plaster surfaces were painted and stenciled; traces of the work may be seen.

Library: Wood lath and plaster walls with a heavy crown molding on the plaster ceiling. There is a ceiling medallion.

Dining Room: The dining room walls are of walnut paneling with wallpaper in the top third. The dining room ceiling has heavy walnut large and small beams. The small beams are spaced 20" on centers.

Music Room (Rear Parlor): Its walls are paneled in walnut with a frieze and crown molding similar to the Front Parlor. The ceiling is plaster and has plaster moldings, a parget and a medallion. This room originally had painted and stenciled walls, some of which may be seen.

Other rooms: Bathroom walls have glazed terra cotta tiles in the lower portion and plaster in the upper portion. The breakfast room has plaster walls.

All major first floor rooms have 14 foot ceilings and molded baseboards. Their wall thickness is 6-1/2".

Second floor: The plaster ceilings are about 12 feet high. The master bedroom is ornamented with festoon-patterned plaster frieze moldings. In other chambers the wood lath and plaster walls are accentuated with molded rectangular panels, and have a variety of cornice moldings.

5. Doorways and doors:

Basement: Most of the 3'-6" x 7'-1" brick openings do not have doors. There is a 3'-0" x 7'-8" x 1-3/4" wood door to the wine cellar.

First floor:

Entry Hall: The doorway of the entry hall is approximately nine feet tall with a semi-circular transom. Two arched side doors flank the entry with wood panels separated by thin mullions (they measure 3'-3" x 9'-4" x 1-3/4"). The west door leads to the library and the east door leads to the Front Parlor.

Arched wood double doors at the rear of the hall lead to a service hallway and a rear stairway.

An arched opening to the west of the main stairway leads to the dining room and another arched doorway to the east of the main stairway, leads to the Music Room (Rear Parlor).

Front Parlor: Its west wall has an arched doorway to the entry hall. Its south wall contains a segmentally arched sliding double door (glass lights) leading to the Music Room (Rear Parlor).

Dining Room: The east wall contains a series of arched wooden doorways leading to a rear service hall and an arched opening leading to the entry hall. The doorways have four-panel doors.

Walnut surrounds are used on the doorways and openings. Most doors are four panels.

Second floor: Four-paneled doors.

6. Windows: Flat surrounds have plain moldings. The second floor hall has a circular skylight with leaded glass.
7. Decorative features and trim: The mansion abounds with decorative work from the main stairway to the mantels and the wall surfaces to the ceilings. Wall and ceiling descriptions are mentioned on pages 7 and 8.

The majority of the mantels are of white Italian marble. A stone mantel in the northeast frame projection has Ionic columns and entablature, the frieze of which is carved with Greek figures. The Music Room has a walnut paneled mantel with a rectangular tiled opening and wood console-like brackets. The white Italian marble mantel in the Front Parlor has an oval opening and carved work in floral and leaf motifs.

In the dining room a marble-topped serving table projects from the wall on ornate console brackets.

The butler's pantry has built-in cabinets.

The Snowden family has been owning the mansion for more than 100 years. Some of their noteworthy furniture and furnishings may be seen.

8. Hardware: Standard brass hardware is used throughout. There are butt hinges with decorated hinge pins, brass knobs and knob plates.
9. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning: Steam heat with radiators is provided in all rooms. Unit air-conditioners are provided in some rooms.
 - b. Lighting: There is electric service in the house with some elaborate chandeliers.
 - c. Plumbing: The house is plumbed.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The mansion is on a 7-1/2 acre lot (originally 200 acres) bounded on the east, west and south sides by Snowden Circle. The surrounding area is mostly residential and includes the Annesdale Snowden Historic District. The house is reached through a driveway off Lamar Avenue. Adjacent to the driveway, at the northeast corner of the house, is a hitching post and a horse mounting block. Another hitching post is at the porte cochere, which is located on the mansion's west elevation.
2. Landscaping: The entire site is heavily wooded with oaks and magnolias dominating. Oaks range in size to 6' diameter. There are three formal garden areas. One is directly north of the house in the center of the driveway. It is a point-generated composition. A second area is located to the west of the building and a brick walkway connects the porte cochere with a circular water basin containing a fountain and sculpture. A flower garden is located to the southwest of the house. The rest of the area around the house is grassed.
3. Outbuilding: There is a frame carriage house about 150' south of the mansion.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views: There is a good photograph of the facade of the house prior to the construction of the additions in Part II of Art Work of Memphis (Chicago: The Gravure Illustration Company, 1912).

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Property records. Shelby County Courthouse, 140 Adams Street, Memphis, Tennessee.

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2. Secondary and published sources:

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Newspaper articles:

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Talley, Robert. "Yesteryear in Memphis, No. 11." The Commercial Appeal. June 22, 1941.

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PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1972 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the West Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed by Robert C. Giebner (University of Arizona), project supervisor, and Richard H. Hulan, project historian (Nashville).

Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, took the photographs of the building in 1974.

The written data was edited in the Spring of 1985 by Susan McCown, HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, for transmittal to the Library of Congress.